



Cal OES
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**State, Federal Experts Update Legislature on Status of
Early Earthquake Warning System in California**

SACRAMENTO – Home to one of the most diverse socioeconomic and geographic landscapes, California is also at risk of a major earthquake every day. While no one can reliably predict earthquakes, technologies do exist to rapidly detect seismic waves as earthquakes initiate. Today, experts from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) went before a joint informational Legislative hearing of the Committees on Governmental Organizations to discuss the future of an operational earthquake early warning (EEW) system.

The hearing, "California's Earthquake Preparedness: Status of the Earthquake Early Warning System," included testimony from the state's leading emergency managers and planners, as well as nationally recognized earthquake scientists.

"There's no doubt that we have the best minds in the state, in the country working on this system," said Cal OES Director Mark Ghilarducci. "I learned early on that we couldn't just pick up the Japanese model or the Turkish model and lay it over California. Our state has a unique set of impacts and risks."

Cal OES Director speaks before the Joint Legislative Hearing on the early earthquake warning system.
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This massive effort to establish the early earthquake warning system is aimed at adding valuable seconds to an already established California Integrated Seismic Network (CISN). These seconds could be used to halt industrial processes, shut down critical infrastructure or even warn doctors in the middle of delicate procedures. These seconds can add up to more lives saved and less property destroyed during a destructive earthquake.

"Both state and federal efforts are aligned by giving early earthquake warnings to the public through the CISN," said Doug Given, geologist with the USGS. Given went on to say that EEW could save lives and property in the near future.

On Oct. 15, 2014, another informational hearing on earthquake early warning was held in San Francisco, on the heels of the largest earthquake in Northern California in 25 years epicentered in Napa on Aug. 24. Then-Senator Alex Padilla, who organized the San Francisco hearing, sponsored the 2013 bill SB 135 that formalized the multi-agency cohort, led by Cal OES, to develop a comprehensive early warning

system for California. While recovery is still underway in the Napa-area from last year's earthquake, costs have already gone above \$35 million.

"Nine seconds of warning may not sound like much," said Richard Allen, Director of the UC Berkeley Seismological Laboratory, "but this time is enough for our brains to process the warning and take emergency actions."

According to the State Geologist, John Parrish of the California Geological Survey, California has up to 700 earthquakes a week, many of which are not perceived by humans (these are typically at or below magnitude 2.0). Approximately 300 earthquakes happen each year that have reports of being felt by someone in California. A magnitude 7 earthquake hits about once every 10 years.

At today's panel before the Joint Committee also included: John Parrish, State Geologist for California Geological Survey; Richard Allen, Director for UC Berkeley Seismological Laboratory; Thomas Heaton, professor of Engineering Seismology for the California Institute of Technology; Scott Negenzhal, Director of Government Affairs & Strategic Accounts, Seismic Warnings Systems, Inc.; Steve Carlson, California Governments Affairs Counsel, CTIA-The Wireless Association; Peter White, Executive Director of Global Public Policy for AT&T; Barry Anderson, Vice President for Emergency Preparedness and Response at PG&E.